

Interpreting for Deaf Migrants: Challenges and Strategies. The Example of Deaf Turks in Germany

Oya Ataman, Hatice Yildirim-Dähne,
Ege Karar & Okan Kubus

Overview

- The challenges of multi-cultural community interpreting settings
 - Presentation of a scenario
 - Group brainstorming on critical aspects
- Impulse Presentation (Bahadir's concepts)
- Interpreting enactment of given scenario
 - Preparation in small groups
 - Enactment
 - Reflection
- Discussion with three focuses

The challenges of multi-cultural community interpreting settings: Scenario

Location: Gynaecologist

Clients: Doctor, Mother, Daughter

Interpreters: Deaf Interpreter, Hearing
Interpreter

Problem: Parents want to know if girl is still
virgin

The challenges of multi-cultural community interpreting settings

- Presence/Absence of Deaf Interpreters
- Linguistic issues
- Power issues
- Intercultural issues
- Trauma exposure

Presence/Absence of Deaf interpreters

- Problems of distance and proximity
- Complexity dealing with yet another person in the setting
- Difficulties in organizing interpreters and their payment
- Lack of trust in professionalism of interpreters
- Confidentiality issues within double-minority communities
- Preference for simultaneous interpreting rather than consecutive interpreting (even though it might be much more concise for the clients in consecutive interpreting settings)

Presence/Absence of Deaf interpreters

- what now?

- Networking across the globe
- Establishing the profession for Deaf interpreters as well as preparing the market

Linguistic issues

- SLI's lack of adaptation to double minority customers (vocabulary choice, register, measure of iconicity, unfamiliar nonmanuals etc.)
- How to find the right interpreter near you
- Difficulties in stating what they need, that they did not understand their interpreters

Linguistic Issues - what now?

Developing training for Deaf interpreters as well as hearing ones to work with Deaf migrants by themselves and as teams.

Power issues

- Unbalanced power relations between hearing professional and migrant and
- Between interpreter(s) and migrant
- Power imbalance involved in gender issues
- Migrant customer does not know his/her rights

Power Issues – what now?

“The apparent power imbalance in these situations legitimizes the interpreter to stand up for both her own rights and those denied to the speechless individual for whom she interprets.” (Bahadir 2010, 127)

Revisit Codes of Conduct.

Intercultural Issues

Turkish and German Cultures differ much in gender roles and religious aspects of life.

- Difficulties in keeping up eye contact between deaf customers and sign language interpreters of different gender.
- Saying hello and introducing oneself may already go wrong: In Turkish, male guests are greeted first, in Germany female ones.
- Time and appointments are managed differently.

Intercultural Issues - what now?

“If too many factors are to be taken into consideration and no reliable standard/solution can be agreed upon at any stage of the activity, interpreters and clients alike might fall into weariness and paralysis.” (Bahadir 2010, 127)

Research and keep a comparative list of your working cultures.

Trauma exposure

- Deaf migrant customers are likely to have gone through traumatic events in their recent past. The traumas emerge in various settings with linguistic and behavioral implications.
- Many of the interpreters are Deaf migrants themselves. In their work they are strongly exposed to experiencing their customers' traumas second hand. This may enhance their own trauma and/or cause compassion fatigue.

Trauma Exposure – what now?

“In most situations, especially those involving crises, conflict and distress, interpreters do not have the luxury of being phlegmatic and therefore refraining from questioning.” (Bahadir 2010, 127)

Active prevention of compassion fatigue.

Conclusion: Three focuses

- Training specific to our needs
- Dealing with a Code of Ethics that may not fit involvement of minority cultures
- Cross-country professional networking that does not rely on English and IS.

Training specific to our needs: Sebnem Bahadir's Approach

Sebnem Bahadir specializes in community interpreting for spoken languages and its pedagogy. Her approach combines translation and interpreting studies with cultural anthropology and performance arts. She is running a well-known program at University of Mainz in Germersheim. We thank her for inviting us to her enactments.

The dilemmas within the profession of the interpreter

- In whose interest do they work — that of themselves, their clients, the general public, the state, patriarchy?
- What role does power play in their operations?
- Are they impartial, benign practitioners or partisan oppressive enforcers of social conformity, deriving their role from wider inequalities of power (based on race, class, gender)?

Bahadir 2010, 126-127

The Dynamics of Professionalism

“Professionalism is closely connected to issues of power and control. Although at first sight it seems logical that members of an aspiring occupational group should strive to control their “area” and to define the rules of the game by means of their definitions, denominations, boundaries, and criteria for both exclusion and inclusion, this aim is very difficult to realize in the case of occupations like interpreting. Interpreting in the real world continuously undermines attempts to fix and consolidate its boundaries. The normalizing aspect of professionalization denies the interpreter the flexibility required for adapting to every new situation into which she enters, or rather intrudes, when performing her task “ (Bahadir 2010, 216)

Interpreting Enactments

(see http://www.inter-pret.ch/uploads/media/20130601_Dolmetschinszenierung_Bahadir_d.pdf)

Interpreting Enactments

Interpreting enactments are an innovative holistic training method for interpreters, professionals who employ them and their customers.

Interpreting enactments foster intrusions of the Other, therefore especially fit for settings with high power and culture differentials.

According to Bahadir,

- Interpreting is 'whole-body' (holistic) action
- Interpreting is sovereign yet heteronomous, neutral yet subjectively empathic attitude and action.
- Interpreting is a to-and-fro between distance and proximity, a bricolage, a performance and enactment.

Bahadir 2013

1) Actor: *participate/perform*

- Active participation in exercises, workshops, rehearsals, stagings
- Scenarios are prepared in fragments first, then completed in teams.
- Each participant plays different roles.
- The interpreter is the main character, however assumes positions of the other participants like migrant, doctor, teacher, policeman, social worker etc.
- Participation of authentic professionals like social workers, doctors etc.

The ability for empathy as basic skill for Interpreting: sympathy versus empathy

2) Observer: *observe, reflect, evaluate*

- Own interpreting actions (of own interpreting strategies and techniques after, acting, and later during acting)
- Position/actions/attitudes of the other participants of the scenario
- Interpreting acts, strategies and techniques of the interpreter acting

Participant observer control: selfreflexion – external reflexion

Taken from Bahadir 2013

3) Director: *decide, change*

1. Discussion about the enactment, criticise and be criticized/ accept criticism
2. Jointly design and change the scenario before, during and after the enactments

**The ability to give and take criticism –
discretionary competence**

Taken from Bahadir 2013

Strategies 1 (Marth 2015)

- **Moderation**
 - Long time lag
 - Ask questions
 - Check if you are understood (get feedback)
 - Repetitions
 - Talk before interpreting
 - Focus on target
 - Create Transparency
- **Adjustment of contents**
 - Change sentence structure
 - Explain technical terms
 - Simplify
 - Add examples
 - Omissions (however rarely)
 - Identify interculturally relevant information and make sure it is not ignored unconsciously (this point is not in Marth, but is added by us)

Strategies 2 (Marth 2015)

- **Vocabulary choice**
 - Paraphrase
 - Reduce National Vocabulary
 - Take over Signs from Migrant
 - Reduce mouthing
 - Reduce fingerspelling
- **Presentation**
 - Use non manual markers
 - Use gestures
 - Iconicity
 - Slow
 - Big
- **Grammar**
 - Constructed Action
 - Use of Spacial Markers
 - Simplify

References

- Bahadir, Sebnem. *Dolmetschinszenierungen: Kulturen, Identitäten, Akteure*. SAXA, 2010
- ----. See also <http://uni-mainz.academia.edu/SebnemBahadir> and <http://www.fb06.uni-mainz.de/deutsch/659.php>
- Marth, Magdalena. „Die Migranten haben Einfluss genommen auf mein Dolmetschen, ganz klar“. Besonderheiten und Strategien beim Dolmetschen für taube Migranten. *Das Zeichen* 100/15, 306-317.
- *Van Der Noot Lipsky, Laura and Connie Burk. Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*. Trauma Stewardship Institut. <http://traumastewardship.com>
- Figley, Charles R. *Gift From Within - PTSD Resources for Survivors and Caregivers*. <http://www.giftfromwithin.org/html/What-is-Compassion-Fatigue-Dr-Charles-Figley.html>

Thank you for your attention.
Please contact us for questions and
please do share your ideas with us.

okankubus@gmail.com

hatice.ydaehne@icloud.com

oya@posteo.de

ege.karar@googlemail.com